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# LETTER DATED 3 SEPTEMBER 1996 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the statement made by the President of the United States, Mr. William J. Clinton, on 3 September 1996, on the situation that has arisen in Iraq.

I would be grateful if you would have this note and the text of the statement circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Edward W. GNEHM, Jr.
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

3 September 1996

William J. Clinton
President of the United States
Washington, D.C.
Delivers Statement on the U.S. Military Strike Against Iraq

Three days ago, despite clear warnings from the United States and the international community, Iraqi forces attacked and seized the Kurdish-controlled city of Irbil in northern Iraq. The limited withdrawals announced by Iraq do not change the reality, Saddam Hussein's army today controls Irbil and Iraqi units remain deployed for further attacks.

These acts demand a strong response and they have received one. Earlier today I ordered American forces to strike Iraq. Our missiles sent the following message to Saddam Hussein: when you abuse your own people or threaten your neighbours you must pay a price.

It appears that one Kurdish group which in the past opposed Saddam now has decided to cooperate with him. But that cannot justify unleashing the Iraqi army against the civilian population of Irbil. Repeatedly over the past weeks and months we have worked to secure a lasting cease-fire between the Kurdish factions.

The Iraqi attack adds fuel to the factional fire and threatens to spark instability throughout the region. Our objectives are limited but clear: to make Saddam pay a price for the latest act of brutality; reducing his ability to threaten his neighbours and America's interests.

First, we are extending the no-fly zone in southern Iraq. This will deny Saddam control of Iraqi airspace from the Kuwaiti border to the southern suburbs of Baghdad and significantly restrict Iraq's ability to conduct offensive operations in the region. Second, to protect the safety of our aircraft enforcing this no-fly zone, our cruise missiles struck Saddam's air defence capabilities in southern Iraq.

The United States was a co-sponsor of Security Council resolution 986 (1995), which allows Iraq to sell amounts of oil to purchase food and medicine for its people, including the Kurds.

Irbil, the city seized by the Iraqis, is a key distribution centre for this aid. Until we are sure these humanitarian supplies can actually get to those who need them, the plan cannot go forward and the Iraqi Government will be denied the new resources it has been expecting. Saddam Hussein's objectives may change, but his methods are always the same: violence and aggression against the Kurds, against other ethnic minorities, against Iraq's neighbours.

Our answer to that recklessness must be strong and immediate, as President Bush demonstrated in Operation Desert Storm, as we showed two years ago when Iraq massed its forces on Kuwait's border and as we showed again today.

We must make it clear the reckless acts have consequences, or those acts will increase. We must reduce Iraq's ability to strike out at its neighbours and we must increase America's ability to contain Iraq over the long run.

The steps we are taking today will further all those objectives. Time and again, Saddam Hussein has made clear his disdain for civilized behaviour. He brutalized his own people, attacked his neighbours, supported terrorism and sought to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Our policy is equally clear. When our interest in the security of our friends and allies is threatened, we will act with force if necessary. That is what we did this morning in Iraq.

I know the thoughts and prayers of all Americans are with our military men and women who are conducting this mission. God bless them and the nation they are serving.

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